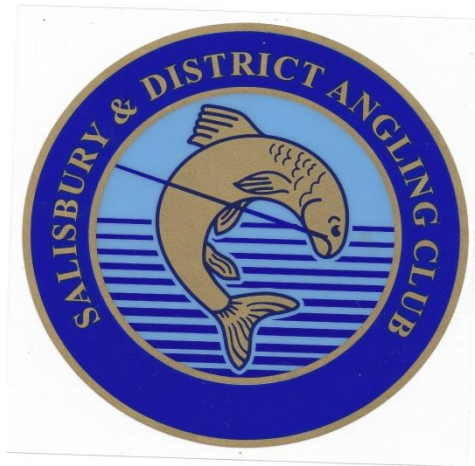


S & D A C Newsletter

December 2015



Salisbury & District Angling Club
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Dear Members,

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 12th January 2016

Will be held at The Cycling Club, Salt Lane, Salisbury, SP1 1DU.

Game Fishing Report 2015

Another season draws to a close. A few hardy members are still out chasing rainbows and grayling, but the waters have generally become very quiet in the run-up to Christmas. We find ourselves in a very healthy position with around 1,600 game fishing members and a growing waiting list. Our portfolio of about 30 miles of chalk streams and several trout lakes, together with fees at an affordable level, mean that demand for membership continues to grow.

The 2015 season started slowly with much better river and bank conditions than we have had for some years. Water flows were good, the aquifers full and all our fisheries opened on 1st April. Fishing conditions were challenging with little weed growth, only average hatches of grannom and cold, wet weather. A few large dark olives and a notable hatch of yellow may dun later in the spring took us through to the mayfly. The first of these (mayflies) appeared at West Amesbury around 11th March and, a week or so later, fish were seen feeding on them. This year, we did not have dense hatches, but the hatches were prolonged. Members enjoyed good fishing and some good sized fish were taken. The summer months brought very low flows; July was windy, August was wet, mayflies continued hatching, blue winged olives appeared but often very late in the evening, and the very best fishing was after many had gone home. September brought the usual daddy

long legs, sedges and pale wateries and, after a decline in visits through the summer, the members returned and fishing was good.

Overall, a challenging season that initially held good promise for water flows. However, as it went on, the aquifers were low, river flows weak, weed growth was poor and swans laid waste to many of our beats.

The lack of weed and the excess swan population left some of the favoured areas devoid of any cover and the fish did not hold there. Plenty of beats remained good until very late in the season, but sometimes members seemed to want to persist in the poorer areas when beats in better condition were only a short distance away.

Catch returns this year are showing numbers of fish caught per visit at about the same level as we generally see. Some fisheries were up and others down, but averages at approximately 1.5 to 2.0 fish per visit continue. Of course, this disguises enormous variation with some members consistently catching and others much less successful.

The overall number of visits is up this year and wild fish caught vastly outnumber stocked caught. 90% of members fished catch and release.

Durnford had 2,094 visits with 3,859 fish caught; 212 were stocked fish and 250 fish were taken for the table.

West Amesbury had 1,082 visits for 2,738 fish caught. Lower Woodford had 728 visits for 953 caught and Stonehenge 392 visits for 819 caught.

There is too much information to include here, but we will put all of the data from the catch return books on to the website for you to study at leisure.

We stocked the same number of fish as the previous year, approximately 2,000 brown and 1,000 rainbow trout. We retained the same supplier and the keepers have selected and marked our own fish in order to ensure quality. Later stockings have included some bigger specimens as they tend to grow fast in the stock ponds.

The brown trout go into the Avon at Durnford, West Amesbury and above and into the Wylfe at Stapleford. Close to 1,000 fish were stocked at Durnford.

We do not stock into the Nadder, the Ebbel or the Bourne. We only stock the Wylfe at Stapleford where trout habitat is poor; in time, we hope to join other clubs in the "Wild Wylfe" policy as we improve the river at Stapleford for our wild stock. Our current policy is to stock into those areas that do not naturally support wild stock and where the habitat is degraded and characterised by slow flowing, silty reaches with little ranunculus and often steep perched banks. We do not put fish in areas where trout naturally thrive and breed, as stock fish will out-compete and disturb spawning behaviour. Good trout habitat can seem a little more challenging to the angler, but we try to balance angler access with the environmental considerations. Our beats will always be kept in the chalk stream style but with a greater balance towards good flows, clean gravel, weed growth, fish cover and habitat for invertebrates in the water and on the banks.

Maintenance of the banks takes up most of the staff time in the summer months; this season has been a little easier for fringing and mowing with no flood aftermath to contend with. New fences, stiles, gates and bridges have been put in throughout the fisheries and a lot of trees have been cut back to aid casting. Gates and locks at West Amesbury will help to keep trespassers off our banks. Our staff has been involved in gravel jetting, electric fishing, stocking and river restoration amongst many other tasks. Key improvement projects have been completed at Queensberry Bridge, West Amesbury, Sutton Veny, Bulbridge and other sites. We had a serious fish kill at Ratfyn Lake due to low oxygen levels; this has happened before and the lake remains closed whilst we work out its future with the owner.

We held a successful game fishers meeting again this year and another open day was held at Manningford. Both were well attended, though the clash with Rugby World Cup final and the game meeting would probably best have been avoided.

Late in the season, we found out that Wessex Water was planning a facility to discharge washings to the river at Durnford. This is connected with the big pipeline project that you will have seen. After discussions

involving ourselves and the Durnford Estate Manager, the proposal has been withdrawn and will be redesigned in a more suitable way to protect the river. We were very pleased to win this small battle, but it tells us we need to be ever vigilant if we are to keep our rivers safe. Salmon & Trout Conservation UK were extremely helpful with this issue giving us excellent guidance on how to approach the problem.

In 2016, we will want to keep our eyes open for leads to new water and we will be tackling improvements to the banks at West Amesbury, habitat work at Stapleford and, possibly, a major project for a bypass stream at Norton Bavant as well as lots of other continued improvements.

John Stoddart
Vice Chair Game

AN APPEAL - IN 2016, THE SALISBURY AND DISTRICT ANGLING CLUB WILL BE CELEBRATING ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1941, the Club was formed by a few 'chums' in Salisbury and it was named 'The Bourne Angling Club' after the first water acquired.

So much (as you may appreciate) has happened since those early days in the Second World War.

The Club wishes to produce a book in this anniversary year to document, celebrate and preserve some of the history of the Club. Events have passed which have only been consigned to memory by our members. We need to salvage those memories before they are lost forever. I have been tasked with gathering together as much information (in any form we can) to go in the book.

To this end, we are appealing to all you good folk to scratch your heads, rummage through old diaries and photos and talk to any older members you know. Please forward your discoveries to me. This will contribute to an already substantial archive we are able to access from old Club Minutes, etc.

We wish the book to contain historical facts and hysterical facts! All of you have stories to tell about days out on our Club Waters so get writing and be one of our contributors to this 75th anniversary book.

Please send any information via E Mail to :-

rickypolden@virginmedia.com or post or drop your gems into the Cart Shed. Any original material will be returned safely to you.

In anticipation, very many thanks.

Ricky Polden

Committee Member

Entomology

The evidence is overwhelming that, for Green Belt areas, SSSI and SAC sites have no environmental protection from our National Governing bodies, particularly if it conflicts with their policies or measures. Their tactic is to ask for forgiveness, not permission; that is, do it, and see if there is a backlash. Everyone wants good clean water, especially businesses, but also the general public. It costs to clean polluted waters, but not to pollute them. Take it clean, give it back polluted, makes financial sense.

The UK has 98% of the world's chalk streams and therefore from a purely financial point of view as each stream deteriorates, the remaining ones become more valuable. This means that it is absolutely vital that we conserve and improve the quality of our S&DAC waters. The price of good fishing waters will increase and also the cost of club and syndicate membership.

So how can we be sure that S&DAC will have a club in the future?

One of the ways is to have a large, experienced team of pollution monitors, who employ effective communication and irrefutable data. The first part of becoming experienced is to have participated in the ARMI (Anglers' Riverfly Monitoring Initiative) invertebrate identification course, currently priced at £30 per person. This cost is derived from supplying course materials and running costs/equipment (sampling nets,

trays, buckets, benchmarking and voucher sample retention, temperature loggers, microscopes, viewing lamps, etc). These items will be available for members' use at the Cart Shed in our Centre for Conservancy.

The second is to have physically performed kick sampling and qualitative analysis of the results, at least 6 times in total on three of our rivers annually.

For those members with limited time, what better way to justify going to the bankside than saying *"I am going to help protect our environment"*? It is essential that the whole membership fully understands the severity of the problem facing us. Pollution doesn't distinguish between coarse, game or sea fishing and is present 24/7. Every time we go fishing is an opportunity for all our members to police our waters, by taking notice of what's around us, and reporting anything unusual. If any member wants to become a monitor (and enhance their fishing experience), please let me or any Club official know. We need more monitors, we can't have enough monitors.

Jan Szakowski
S&DAC ARMI Coordinator

White Horse Fishery Update

There was a buzz about the fishery from day one this season, as one after another, anglers just dropping in for a look around spotted the shoals of late-spawning barbel gliding across the shallows. Before long, stories of barbel taken on the float in the afternoon and quiver tip at dusk were being exchanged and a host of dedicated members could be seen setting up in the prime swims most evenings. It was by far the most activity I've seen on the fishery, other than winter matches, and it was fantastic. For myself, despite carefully planning and refining my methods, that rattle on the rod tip always resulted in a chub or a trout, despite consistently getting a barbel or three rooting around amongst my loose feed each visit.

It wasn't only the barbel that made themselves conspicuous but elusive - some seriously beefy perch loomed into view at various swims, both at

the top end and in the copse, but it is not clear if these are the same, nomadic fish or separate, resident perch-packs - they show up in the same places but there is definitely an element of here-today, gone-tomorrow to them. I'm working on unravelling that mystery but, like the barbel, persistence is going to be the key. Big, bold perch may be emblematic of the Avon but it was a strange surprise to see a pair of double-figure ornamental carp lazily following each other around the confluence pool one evening.

Although specimen encounters can be hit or miss, what has remained true this season is that certain swims will generally provide great sport with dace, wild brownies and modestly-sized chub on trotted maggots. A few weeks ago, I decided to swap the maggots for worms and got the shock of my life when a strike into a typical, lazy bite resulted in a colossal salmon leaping skyward and then tearing off upstream like a torpedo, leaving my line shredded in a clump of weed. Game anglers ignore the potential of this fishery for migratory and resident salmonids at their cost; it is remarkably productive for wildies and holds a good head of sea trout from mid-summer. But it is the size of some of the veteran wild brownies holed up in the less disturbed lies that are the fishery's real gems - my best to date is four and a half pounds, but I know larger fish have been landed. My wish for 2016 is that one or two of the Club's talented game anglers really devote themselves to unlocking some of these secrets by fishing different methods and conditions through the season.

Currently, we're waiting for the river to really come into its winter form, when the level comes up a couple more feet, the remnants of weed die right back and are washed away and the large slacks form - these refugees from the torrent are the places to target most coarse species, often at very close range. Of course, the concentration of prey species and the cover offered by the deeper, turbid waters means that big pike take up their winter residence - I'm busy crafting some of my own unique lures and can't wait for the right conditions to present them to our bigger pike (with the aim of beating my fishery personal best of 20lbs). However, I've definitely got a touch of perch fever at present, so will have to decide where my best chances lie for each session.

There have been some recent access improvements, with a large fallen tree cleared from the path into the copse and a route cleared from the

copse signing-in book due east straight to the river, outside of the fence line. Given the propensity of the copse poplars to topple over during storms, I think it would be advisable to avoid fishing in there in severely windy conditions.

The White Horse Fishery is a special place – it is big, over a mile long, and it offers the most important ingredients that many look for in our river fishing; a beautiful setting, solitude and specimen fish across a tantalising range species. I heartily encourage members to plan a day's winter fishing in the coming months and please feel free to get in touch via the Forum if you'd like any advice.

Dominic Langley

Our Newest Committee Member

Over the last few years, I have been lucky enough to have had the time to help the Club occasionally with some of its fishery improvement projects. When I retired earlier this year, I could give a bit more time; a couple of days most weeks, mainly grass cutting, tree work and routine maintenance with the keeper team. Not only was this beneficial to the Club, but also for the sanity of my wife.

A few months ago, I was honoured to be asked if I would become a member of the committee. Initially, I had visions of joining the cast of 'Last of the Summer Wine', but after accepting and attending the first committee meeting, I found my concerns were misplaced. Some of them are actually younger than me!

They are an eclectic bunch, with many talents and skills (still not sure why I was asked), but all are focussed on the interests of the Club as a whole and on what can be done to improve the quality of fishing for our members. The monthly committee meetings are quite lively, with many useful ideas forthcoming.

I have actually fished even less this year than when I was working full-time; I find that just being busy next to a river or lake fulfils most of the reasons I go fishing, whether just cutting the grass or doing a bigger

project with hired-in plant. There is also usually more to show for it afterwards!

It is now over 40 years since I first joined S&DAC and a group of us, while in our late teens, used to carry out work parties at Petersfinger most closed season weekends under the (not very close) supervision of Tom Burden and his son Dave. I am not sure how many waters the Club had then; I wish I had kept all my old year books, but looking at my 1982/83 one, there were 15 maps. The current year book has 38!

I have to admit, I am ashamed that I have not fished all these waters, either coarse or game. Some I have visited for grass cutting / fringing and thought what a great looking fishery, but have yet to return with a rod.

I would urge you all to be brave and try different water soon; you never know, it could become your favourite!

Personally, I would like us to improve the quality of the fishing, parking and access wherever possible on our existing waters, rather than accumulate more in the year book. "It costs less to improve than move" also applies to angling clubs. Unless, of course, a really fantastic water becomes available.

Mervyn Griffiths

Hamer Lake Fishing Tactics

In the first eight months that S&DAC secured the fishing rights at Hamer, some 194 members and 18 guests made over 600 visits to the lake. The quality of the stocked fish is excellent due to Steve Trevett's selection at our suppliers, the abundance of natural food in the lake and the clean and clear water.

The fighting quality of these fish has to be experienced first-hand. On my last visit, I was taken down to my last few turns of backing by a beautifully conditioned four-pounder. As well as the rainbows, a few brown trout have been caught. Brown trout have only been stocked

once in Hamer in 2004, so these are all grown on from the original stocking of one to one and a half pound fish.

Looking at the catch returns over this period, it is obvious that certain members have mastered the techniques whilst others struggle. Because of Hamer's abundance of natural food, the fish tend to respond to imitations of their natural food such as buzzers, damsel nymphs, pheasant tail nymphs and blood worms with a preference to smaller size flies.

Due to Hamer's size, there is a large area for the fish to hide beyond the range of even top class casters. So what can we do to improve our chance of catching? Obviously, improving our casting distance increases the area we cover. Take opportunities such as the S&DAC open day to get instruction from some top class instructors and also take some time to practice even for 10 or 20 minutes before you concentrate on fishing. Arriving early in the morning, you will often find the fish close to the edge, within easy casting range. Approach the lake as you would approach a chalk stream; do not rush into the water and you can often catch trout at your feet. Depending on the weather conditions, around about mid-morning the fish tend to move away from the edge of the lake into the deeper water. Deep water that is accessible from the bank can be found on the bankside opposite the fishing hut. The depth of the water, when the lake is full, is in the order of 12 feet. When fishing this area, I will use an intermediate line and, on a hard day, a small lure, black or orange size 12 or 14, allowing up to 1 minute before starting to retrieve often resulting in the fly being taken on the drop.

To get the best from Hamer, spend some time and learn the deeps and shallows, trying different areas when you visit. Start by looking at the picture, on the back wall of the hut, taken when the water level was some two foot down. If you have yet to experience Hamer, pay a visit and I am sure you will enjoy yourself.

Colin Turner
Hamer Lake Bailiff

Thoughts From West Sussex

Hi all,

Your Chairman (Robert Leachman) has kindly asked me to write this newsletter article. By way of introduction and background, I joined the Club as a Game Associate member at the beginning of May last year, 2014. The connection with the Club is because I spent 4 days on the machair lochs of South Uist in the Outer Hebrides in July 2011 boat fishing for wild brown trout with a 10-foot #6 wand and a team of wet flies. This was the first time I had ever cast a fly line and, besides catching such stunning beauties, success for me was going through the whole of day 4 without any wind knots in my leader (result = one suitably impressed ghillie and a wee dram or three back at the lodge!). Living not far from Arundel it therefore takes me, on a good run, about an hour and twenty minutes to cover the c.70 miles to the Cart Shed. As a relative newcomer to the gentle art of fly fishing for trout, I had initially thought that say 5 visits as a first season target (versus the annual subscription fee) would be sensible; in fact, I managed 8 visits in 2014 and 14 in 2015 and have even found the time to attend both end-of-season Game meetings at Antrobus House.

I stopped playing rugby at 40, cricket at 50 and now find myself rather attracted to your sport. My father did a bit in the Lake District, but I was too young then to fully understand. I am teaching myself, which is so much fun albeit a never-ending challenge, and I really enjoy meandering about with waders in your rivers. Interesting new diversions this year have been the stillwaters of Hamer and Leominstead. Like all newbies, there is so much to learn (watching the fun at mayfly time and tying on a daddy long legs whenever both make me giggle with delight) and I am currently averaging around 1 trout per session and would clearly like to get that up to 3 or 4 tomorrow. Comfort, of course, being that G.E.M. Skues spent his first season on the Itchen with a total "*blank*".

It is so readily apparent that there is an awful lot of expertise in the Club and I am slowly worming my way around and quietly creeping up on the more esteemed trout hunters. The leadership of your entire management team (officers, committee, general manager & keepers, etc) is rather special and I long for the days when I will be able to spend

even more time on your hallowed waters. The generosity of spirit and good humour shown by everyone is truly remarkable. As the Club book's dedication to its members says: *"a shared passion for angling and whose diversity combines into a force to be reckoned with"*. This Club is exactly that and long may it remain so.

With best regards to all those kind enough to have helped on such a memorable and enjoyable journey to date.

Nicholas Frobisher

Happy & proud S&DAC member

SALISBURY & DISTRICT ANGLING CLUB

**AGENDA for AGM 12th January 2016 @7.30pm
At the Cycling Club, Salt Lane, Salisbury, SP1 1DU**

- 1) Apologies for absences.**
- 2) Approval of the Minutes of AGM 2015.**
- 3) Matters Arising from Minutes of AGM held 13th January 2015.**
- 4) Vice Chairman Game Report.**
- 5) Hon. Match Secretary Report.**
- 6) General Manager Report.**
- 7) Subscriptions 2016.**
- 8) Honoraria.**
- 9) Members Propositions**
- 10) AOB (Chairman's Discretion)**

Notes

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